



# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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### **NATIONAL SURVEY: COMMUNITY SATISFACTION WITH POLICE SERVICES**

The National Surveys of Community Satisfaction with Police Services were included in the Population Survey Monitor (PSM) during 1996. The PSM is a household survey conducted by the ABS every quarter which collects information from about 3,000 households Australia wide. One person aged 18 years or over was asked to respond to the survey from each of the selected households.

The National Survey of Community Satisfaction with Police Services provides information on attitudes towards services provided by the police, perceptions on fear of crime and problems in the neighbourhood area. It also provides information on the most recent contact with the police, who initiated the contact and reasons for contact.

#### **SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE POLICE**

More than two-thirds of Australians aged 18 years and over were generally satisfied/very satisfied with services provided by police (70%) and, in particular, with the job that police were doing in supporting community programs (72%). However, only about half of the population (53%) had similar satisfaction levels towards police in dealing with public order problems.

About one in five of Australians had an immediate family member or close friend who worked for the police. However, their perceptions toward services provided by police were similar to those of the rest of the community.

#### **FEAR OF CRIME AND PERSONAL SAFETY**

The majority of Australians felt safe/very safe staying at home alone. The level of fear was greater after dark (80% felt safe/very safe) than during the day (93% felt safe/very safe), especially for females and older people.

The level of personal safety during such activities as walking or jogging locally and travelling on public transport was found to be significantly different during the day compared with after dark. 89% of people felt safe/very safe walking or jogging during the day, and 75% felt safe/very safe using public transport. In contrast, only one-quarter of the population felt safe/very safe to travel after dark and 40% felt safe/very safe walking or jogging locally after dark.

In general, the proportions of males and females who felt safe to be at home, walking or jogging locally and travelling on public transport were similar during the day. However, significantly higher proportions of females felt unsafe after dark than males.

Over half (54%) of persons aged 65 years and over felt unsafe/very unsafe walking or jogging after dark, compared to 40% for the other age groups. Perceptions on unsafe/very unsafe travelling on public transport after dark were very similar across all age groups.

#### **SAFE DRIVING**

The majority of Australians aged 18 years and over (86%) had driven a motor vehicle in the previous 12 months. Of these people, 13% believed that they had always/most of the time driven 10 kilometres per hour or more over the speed limit and 10% believed that they had sometimes been over the 0.05% blood alcohol limit when they drove a car. Australians felt that wearing a seat belt was one of the most important safety protections, with 93% of people indicating that they always wore a seat belt when travelling by car.

## **CONTACT WITH POLICE**

In the previous 12 months, almost half of Australians aged 18 years and over had had contact with police such as in a police station, at a random breath testing station, over the telephone or at a community meeting. With these people, 57% of the most recent contacts were initiated by police. The two most common situations were random breath tests (64%) and traffic violations (12%). For those people who initiated contact with police, the most common reasons were reporting a crime (34%) and getting assistance (19%).

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